

BOROUGH OF TOTNES.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

To the Totnes Town Council.

Gentlemen,—

In compliance with the order of the Local Government Board, I herewith present you with the annual report for the year 1898.

POPULATION.

The estimated population of the Borough is 4,242. In 1897 the number was 4,100. On November 9th, 1897, the Borough was extended so as to include the additional 142 inhabitants; since that date it is estimated that there has been neither increase nor decrease.

BIRTHS.

The number of Births registered during the year has been 94 (43 boys, 51 girls), equal to a birth-rate of 22.16 per thousand, as compared with 20.49 last year.

DEATHS.

The number of Deaths registered during the same period was 101, viz., 68 as occurring in the Borough, 30 in the Workhouse, and 3 in the Cottage Hospital. Four of the deaths that occurred in the Workhouse and all three of those in the Cottage Hospital have been of residents of the Borough, making the total 75, equal to a mortality of 17.68 per thousand. The mortality of 1897 was 14.39 per thousand.

INJURIES.

There have been two deaths from injuries, one in the Workhouse and one in the Borough (suicide).

ZYMOTIC MORTALITY.

There have been six deaths the registered causes of which come under this heading, viz., 1 from Diphtheria and 5 from Whooping Cough, equal to a zymotic mortality of 1.414 per thousand, slightly above the average.

The following table shows the deaths due to these diseases during the last ten years:—

	1889	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	Tl.
Measles	0	2	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	9
Diphtheria.....	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	10
Whooping Cough.....	4	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	15
Typhoid	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	3	0	0	11

Whooping Cough	16
Typhoid Fever	11
Diphtheria	9
Measles.....	10

46

Equal to an average annual mortality of 1.145 per thousand, calculated upon the population of the census of 1891.

It will be seen that Whooping Cough is the chief cause of death under this heading, accounting for 5 out of the 6 deaths in 1898, and 16 out of the 46 during the ten years ending 31st December last; also that Measles is almost as fatal as Diphtheria and Typhoid Fever, causing 9 deaths, as compared with 10 and 11 in the ten years. I would recommend that both Whooping Cough and Measles be included in the list of those diseases which must be notified. When it became known that Whooping Cough was prevalent notice was given to the head masters to exclude from school children from infected houses.

PHTHISIS MORTALITY.

Ten deaths from Phthisis were registered during the year. Of these 5 occurred in the Borough, 4 in the Workhouse, and 1 in the Cottage Hospital. One of those in the Workhouse and that in the Cottage Hospital were of residents of the Borough, bringing the total to 7; the same number as in 1896 and in 1897, equal to a mortality of 1.65 per thousand; that of England and Wales from this cause averaged 1.73 per thousand per annum for the ten years 1881 to 1891.

INFANT MORTALITY.

Fifteen deaths under 1 year of age were registered, viz., 12 in the Borough and 3 in the Workhouse. This is equal to a mortality of 127.66 per thousand births registered in the Borough.

AGED.

Forty of the 101 deaths were of persons over 65 years of age.

CASES NOTIFIED.

Eight cases of Infectious Diseases were notified during the year. All of these were in the Borough. In 1897 there were 4, viz., 3 in the Borough and 1 in the Workhouse. They were as follows:—Scarlatina, 1; Diphtheria, 3; and Erysipelas, 4. The case of Scarlet Fever was imported, and the infection did not spread. With regard to the cases of Erysipelas and Diphtheria, inspection of the premises has in most cases revealed sanitary defects. I would point out that the forms for notifying do not meet the requirements of Table B, as they do not demand the age of the person affected.

DRAINAGE.

The scheme for improvement of the drainage and providing outfall works has been adopted, and the work of construction is, I understand, to be commenced this month. It provides for the sewerage of the parts of the Borough not now sewered, including the Workhouse, the district treated in Sparrow Meadow, the Manse, Northgate, etc., the whole of the portion recently added to the Borough, the Plains, the new houses in Maudlin Orchard, and the carrying of the sewage to Salt Marsh, and raising the low level sewage by pumping to the high level sewer. It will to some extent remedy the flooding of Warland, and entirely prevent its being flooded with any sewage.

WATER.

During the year the large Bowden Reservoir has been covered, with apparent improvement in the condition of water stored therein. All the reservoirs are now covered.

ROUTINE WORK.

Houses and drains are continually being inspected and defects remedied. The most prevalent defect is in connection with sinks in dwelling houses, many of which are not separated from the drain by a disconnecting air-gap.

Slaughter houses, laundries, factories, and many workshops have been inspected, also the Workhouse and common lodging house.

There have been several new dwelling houses erected during the year, but more are desirable, to withdraw the population as much as possible from the dwellings in lanes and passages, which are unsanitary and light and air.

I had to report one case of overcrowding.

The report of the Inspector of Nuisances accompanies my report.

The rainfall during the year has been 40.31 inches, as compared with 42.24 in 1897 and 43.76 inches in 1896.—I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,

KENNETH R. SMITH, M.D., M.O.H.

16th January, 1899.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR.

7, High Street, Totnes.

January 14th, 1899.

To the Urban District Council of the Borough of Totnes.

Gentlemen,—

I beg to report that I have during the past year, ending December 31st, 1898, frequently visited the Slaughter Houses, Public Courts and Passages, and other parts of the Borough, and the following nuisances have been reported and dealt with.

The Smoke Test has been applied to the Drains of 32 houses, with the following results: 15 were found defective (in several cases the defects being very slight), and 17 were found sound and in good repair; of the 15 defective drains and closets, some have been repaired, and in several cases new pipe drains have been laid and new closets substituted for defective ones, and the town water laid on, with flushing apparatus for flushing the same, the whole having been smoke tested after completion and found correct.

Nuisances from defective drains and privies (not smoke tested), 13; from cesspits, 4; nuisances from other causes, 6; all of which have been abated.

I have made 59 written reports to the Sanitary Authority during the year, and 32 notices served for the abatement of nuisances, and 32 for applying the smoke test.—I remain, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JAS. CLARK, Inspector.

